

tion of a monument to the memory of the illustrious Laplace, comes the suggestion that a place should be requested for the publication in *SCIENCE* of the aspiration on the part of the Municipal Council of Beaumont-en-Auge, where Laplace was born, to proceed with the project formed before the World War to erect a memorial to Pierre Simon Laplace, author of "La Mécanique Céleste" and "L'Exposition du Système du Monde."

A committee has been organized in France of the most distinguished members of the Academy of Sciences and affiliated bodies, whose resolve to make the intended monument an international tribute, worthy of the universal service performed by Laplace in the advancement of civilization, extends a call to scientists and scientific bodies of the United States, as well as those of other foreign countries, to hear this appeal for contributions toward the sum of \$3,000 which has been apportioned to be raised here.

Checks drawn to the order of Monsieur Pierre Leger, treasurer of the Committee of Initiative, Paris, and sent to Monsieur Maxime Mongendre, Consul-General of France in New York, at 9 East Fortieth Street, New York City, will be forwarded to M. Leger.

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SCIENTIFIC BOOKS

Flora of the Panama Canal Zone. By PAUL C. STANDLEY. Contribution U. S. Nat. Herbarium. Vol. 27. 1928.

STANDLEY has published a very important contribution to our knowledge of the flora of the Panama Canal region. In 1921 the governor of the Canal Zone asked the assistance of the Department of Agriculture in the preparation of an illustrated flora of the region. Standley was selected to prepare the flora, and the results of his investigations are now published. The purpose of the investigation was not only to contribute to our scientific knowledge of the region, but also to develop our knowledge of tropical agriculture. Some idea of the method of presentation may be obtained from the statement that "with the aid of the many English and Spanish common names, it should not be difficult for the casual visitor to identify most of the important plants of the Canal Zone."

The flowering plants of the region number about two thousand species. Besides the native plants, the keys include also the cultivated plants. The work is

based on the collections of the United States National Herbarium, which for many years has been receiving a wealth of material from collectors. Standley himself visited the Canal Zone twice, studying the flora and making collections. He gave special attention to the common names in use and also to the local uses of plants. The publication, therefore, is not merely a taxonomic account of the flora, but includes also much material of more general interest.

An interesting account is given of the contrasts in physiography and flora of the Atlantic and Pacific slopes. About two thirds of the Canal Zone lies on the Atlantic slope and has a highly diversified flora, very little of the pioneer vegetation remaining. The Pacific slope is comparatively arid, and the vegetation is very different in type from that of the Atlantic slope. This difference in the two floras consists not only in the general appearance, but also in the genera and species represented. The most conspicuous element of the Atlantic slope flora is the great number and variety of palms. The author also includes a very interesting account of the history of botany exploration in Panama. In short, the publication assembles in a single volume all the available information in reference to the development of our knowledge of a very interesting region. It will also make possible to appreciate and investigate more intelligently the closeness of the relationship of this flora to that of South America. The sixty-six remarkably fine plates picture some of the outstanding features of the flora.

Only about fifty pages are taken up with the general presentation of the region, its history and its outstanding features. The bulk of the volume is made up of the taxonomic presentation of the flora. It is not written in ordinary taxonomic style, but presents the taxonomic facts in simpler and more readable form. Detailed descriptions are not given, but there are keys for identification that will help the taxonomist. These keys include not only the native or naturalized species, but most of the introduced plants grown for ornament or for economic purposes. In the case of the more important plants, those likely to prove of the greatest interest to the public, more extensive accounts are given which will assist in recognizing the species. It is not a rigidly taxonomic work in the usual sense, therefore, but a general introduction to the flora of an interesting region, which may be of service not only to botanists, but also to all who may be interested in the region.

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